



Terry Husseman Sustainable Schools Awards

2003-2004 Annual Summary



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Solid Waste and Financial Assistance Program

Prepared by Michelle Payne

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Introduction

Students from 21 schools in Washington received awards on May 7, 2004, from the state Department of Ecology in a ceremony that celebrated their exceptional efforts to conserve resources, reduce waste and preserve the environment.

The award program recognizes schools for successfully managing and using materials to produce less waste. Schools are judged on the creative features of their programs, their purchasing practices, and their overall success at reducing waste and increasing recycling. The program rewards schools and teachers for developing innovative curriculums or operating long-standing programs. Additionally, schools that submit outstanding plans for future programs will receive seed money to assist with start-up costs.



Linda Hoffman,
Ecology Director

The three categories of awards are Seed Award, Sustainable School Award and Environmental Curriculum Award. The Seed Award assists schools with the cost of starting up programs. This year, nine such awards, ranging from \$1,000 to \$3,000, were presented. The Sustainable School Award acknowledges schools with ongoing waste-reduction or recycling programs. Twelve schools were presented with \$500 each.



Cullen Stephenson,
Master of Ceremonies

The Environmental Curriculum category encourages schools to develop curricula to teach environmental awareness in Washington schools. No applications were submitted for this award, so the money was used to provide additional awards under the other two categories.

The majority of award winning schools were present for the celebration. Members of the audience included Bill Panos, OSPI's Sustainable Schools Program Manager, Representative Sam Hunt, Senator Karen Fraser, and Mrs. Terry Husseman. Ecology's Director, Linda Hoffman, gave the opening remarks and shook hands with all the award winners. As usual, Cullen Stephenson, Ecology's Solid Waste and Financial Assistance Program Manager, handled his duties as Master of Ceremonies with consummate skill.

Recipient Program Summaries

The winners for the 2003-04 school year are as follows:

Seed Award

Burton Elementary, Evergreen School District in Clark County, \$3,000
Chloe Clark Elementary in Pierce County, \$3,000
Issaquah Valley Elementary in King County, \$1,225
Liberty Bell Junior and Senior High and Methow Valley Elementary in Okanogan County, \$1,500
Lister Elementary in Tacoma, \$1,889
Manitou Park Elementary in Tacoma, \$1,240
Orcas Elementary in San Juan County, \$1,000
South Whidbey Intermediate School on Whidbey Island, \$1,400
Taholah School in Grays Harbor County, \$1,500

Sustainable School Award

Cashmere Middle School in Chelan County, \$500
Eisenhower Middle School in Snohomish County, \$500
Acme Elementary in Whatcom County, \$500
Harmony Elementary in Whatcom County, \$500
Kendall Elementary in Whatcom County, \$500
Mt. Baker Junior & Senior Highs in Whatcom County, \$500
Langley Middle School on Whidbey Island, \$500
Komachin Middle School in Thurston County, \$500
Montlake Elementary in Seattle, \$500
North Mason High in Mason County, \$500
Orchard Heights Elementary in Kitsap County, \$500
Tolt Middle School in King County's Riverview School District, \$500

The following summaries show what makes the programs of the winning schools unique, but they are meant as summaries only. For detailed information, contact the Recycling Coordinator at the school.

Seed Award Program Summaries

Taholah School is single campus district in Taholah, a small village located on the Quinault Indian reservation in the remote southwest corner of the Olympic Peninsula.

Taholah School proposes the development of a comprehensive, integrated sustainable projects environmental program. The program will incorporate resource conservation, biological diversity, and social harmony. They will use scrap wood and sawdust from the carpentry class to create compost boxes and bark for use in gardens. The compost box and worm farm will recycle waste and leftover materials from the cafeteria. Students will study the history of native plants including their traditional use for nutritional, ceremonial and medicinal purposes. Studying and growing the native plants will motivate students to preserve the native plants in their community and is another way to restore student and community pride in the traditional Quinault heritage. Students will partner with the tribe by beautifying the community, including the senior's Center, by planting and maintaining flowers and native plants, thus also gaining valuable job training. Flower and native plants will also be grown for fund raising purposes, providing hands on experience in gardening and agricultural science.

The greatest challenge facing the district in the development of the comprehensive, integrated environmental program is the lack of funds available for purchasing the necessary equipment and supplies. With their award funds, Taholah will be able to purchase educational materials, plants, gardening soils, gardening tools, soil testing kits; build composting boxes; develop a marketing program, curriculum, and materials.



Taholah School

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Manitou Park Elementary is in the Tacoma Public School district, they have applied to get a Seed Award so that they may purchase equipment needed for sustainability programs and educational materials. Manitou Park plans to use their award to enhance the school-wide milk carton recycling program; to expand the classroom and staff room recycling program; and to establish a student cooperative program of collecting litter from school and nearby park grounds.

In order to maintain their milk carton recycling program Manitou Park will require funding for janitorial supplies, rubber aprons, and appropriate-sized containers. It will also be challenging to maintain student volunteers throughout the year. If the enthusiasm wanes, they plan to initiate classroom competitions.



The environmental benefits will be a significant reduction of the amount of trash that will get buried in the landfill, and a significant increase in recycling. The students are developing strong recycling habits, are excited to help, and enjoy being called “EnviroKids”. The community of Tacoma benefits from the reduction in garbage--a new landfill will not have to be built so soon! In the classroom-recycling program, once again the students are developing strong recycling habits.

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South Whidbey Intermediate School is located on Whidbey Island. South Whidbey Intermediate plans to use their seed award to implement a recycling and collection sorting system for their primary school. This will be a collaborative effort between buildings because students from the Intermediate school Jr. Waste Warriors will be tutors/mentors for the students at the Primary school. With their award money South Whidbey plans to purchase recycle tubs and barrels for the Primary school classrooms and staff



members. They also hope to create and present a recycling assembly for the Primary and Intermediate schools, and coordinate a field trip to the Recycling Center.

South Whidbey Intermediate hopes that the success of their program will pave the way for the High school and the alternative school to implement a similar recycling program. With the younger students in the district being trained and truly learning the values of recycling, they will become stewards for when they move on to the High School or Alternative school. Participation at the secondary level will reinforce their

skills in becoming life long recyclers.

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Issaquah Valley Elementary is in central Issaquah. Located next to Issaquah Creek, they feel the privilege and responsibility to actively include environmental stewardship as a curriculum strand at each grade level. They are working with the City of Issaquah to become more actively involved in their efforts to preserve the creek and have partnered with the PTA and the Issaquah Schools Foundation to create environmental gardens onsite. However, their efforts and involvement in becoming an “environmentally friendly” institution are in its beginning stages. They recycle in their classrooms but hope to expand their efforts to include other areas of the building as well as increasing efficiency in decisions on products and practices.

Issaquah Valley Elementary anticipates some challenges in attempting to upgrade their sustainability program, including costs for upfront purchases and training students and staff on the ways and means of sustainability.



Issaquah Valley Elementary

Issaquah Valley Elementary will use their award to purchase reusable drinking cups, larger compost bins, recycling containers for use in classrooms, teachers lounge, and cafeteria, and outdoor bins for items to be self-hauled. They will also hold assemblies to educate students on the new program and the importance of recycling and sustainability.

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Chloe Clark Elementary School opened its doors in September 2001. This multi-age school, consisting of grades Kindergarten through four, is a proud partner in the Steilacoom Historical School District and is the only school in DuPont, Washington.

Currently, Chloe Clark Elementary School participates in the Pierce County recycling program which collects and recycles paper, newspaper, magazines, glass, tin, aluminum and cardboard. Chloe Clark does not receive the proceeds generated from the sale of these recyclable materials; however, they do realize a benefit through cost avoidance in solid waste disposal costs. In addition to recycling these basic commodities, the children have initiated programs to recycle printer toner cartridges and cell phones as fundraisers. Through these combined efforts, their school has minimized its solid waste generated to one, 4-cubic yard container per week.

Chloe Clark Elementary will be able to purchase construction materials, tools, and supplies to improve their recycling program, compost bins and worm boxes, student environmental curriculum kits, environmental education and awareness program materials, construct raised beds, and establish compost program.

Chloe Clark Elementary School has the motivation and determination to ensure its children become great stewards of the environment.



Chloe Clark Elementary

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Lister Elementary is located on the east side of Tacoma in the center of the Salishan neighborhood. The community is comprised of immigrants from Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Mexico, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, and other countries. There are approximately 13 different languages and dialects spoken by the students at Lister.

Lister's students recycle paper and plastics, and routinely fill all of their recycling bins that the city provides. For the past two years, 5th graders have been piloting a milk carton recycling plan, involving collection, rinsing, drying, collapsing, and depositing in recycling bins. So far this year, these 5th graders have recycled over 2,000 milk cartons that would have gone to the landfill. Their goal is to extend this program to the rest of the school by the end of the year.

The next step toward sustainability Lister will be taking is composting of food waste. Many of the students have learned about worm composting and cared for classroom compost bins through the EnviroChallenger Program. By implementing a food waste reduction program, the school, students and community will benefit from composting food waste that would otherwise go to the landfill. The vermicompost castings will be used on the school grounds and the Salishan Community Garden, thereby reducing the amount of chemical fertilizers.



Lister Elementary

With their seed award, Lister will be able to purchase Worm Wigwams; composting red worms; worm bedding; and materials for their vermicomposting station.

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Burton Elementary students attend one of the oldest elementary schools in the Evergreen School District located in Clark County. At the time that the district began doing service learning, it seemed natural to contribute to their community by working on the school grounds. Two of the fifth grade classrooms chose to improve the front of the school garden by working the soil, bringing in hardy plants, and creating an inviting environment for squirrels and birds. Items for gardening were contributed by local businesses and families. Students researched and then worked together, problem solving such difficulties as water resources, poor soil, and vandalism.

In the following years, the fifth grade classes continued to landscape other areas of the school grounds, and increased the scope of the project to include recycling of school salad bar vegetables, composting, worm bins, butterfly gardens and native plants as well. Teachers, students, and parents contributed to cover the costs of the projects.



Burton Elementary

With some support from Clark County Environmental Services, Burton's current project has expanded to an 1845 square foot area between the fifth grade classrooms, which is currently an unusable stretch of mud. This area is to be landscaped by the fifth grade students; working together to create a natural habitat for birds, using native plants and natural landscaping. They will be using compost and fertilizer from our recycling and worm bin projects. They hope to have benches and pathways through the garden for teachers, students, and the community to use.

Students will learn about the economic and social factors involved with producing compost and fertilizer by recycling school salad bar leftovers, and eventually work with a green house, where students will be using the system to propagate native plants. Burton Elementary plans to use their award to build a greenhouse and a shed to store tools and protect the compost and worm bins from the possibility of vandalism.

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Orcas Elementary School is located on Orcas Island in the San Juan Islands. The elementary, middle and high schools all share the same cafeteria. We have approximately 493 students and 30 full-time & part-time teachers and aids between all the schools.

Previously, a local neighbor had requested that the school collect food scraps for her to pick up and feed to her pigs. This did not work out because there was often trash mixed in with the food. In order for our composting project to work, we will need to address this problem.

We felt that if an assembly was given for the younger kids about what could and could not be composted, signs made to post above the collection buckets, set the collection bucket away from the trash cans to avoid confusion about what goes where, and have a volunteer stand by the buckets for at least the first month we will be able to avoid this problem.

The elementary school has a vegetable and flower garden. Most of all the classes participate in this project. We then all get to enjoy the fruits of our labors during the summer!

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Liberty Bell Jr./Sr. High and Methow Valley Elementary is located in the Methow Valley of Okanogan County. Both the elementary and junior/senior high schools are housed in the same location in the Methow Valley located in Okanogan County.

The community benefits of recycling at the schools extend beyond the captured waste stream and reduced garbage bills. As the adults volunteer their time to help the students participate in service projects such as recycling, both parties learn from each other. The ideas that the actions of each individual contribute to the collective good and that local decisions can have wider impacts are modeled through these community associations. With the incentives offered by the Department of Ecology, recycling in the Methow Valley can become fully integrated into the school culture.

With over 600 private donations and many hours of volunteer labor to construct and operate the recycling center, the residents of the Methow Valley have displayed their commitment to recycling. Involving children in recycling at home and school is an essential act to insure the longevity of this practice. Providing for a practical recycling system in the schools is one step towards building a long-term habit.

Liberty Bell and Methow Valley Elementary plan to use their award to purchase safe, durable, light weight, portable recycling equipment.

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Sustainable School Award Program Summaries

Eisenhower Middle School is an Everett Public School. Eisenhower Middle School was one of the winners of the 2000-2001 Terry Husseman Best Waste Reduction Award. Today, this same sustainable school recycle program is still in place.

Students and staff are constantly improving their best efforts to “Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle”. The students have created and completed many programs that benefit the entire school population and the surrounding Eisenhower community.

The students benefit from the sustainable programs because the programs help create a healthy environment for the Eisenhower Middle School Community. Better nutrition and exercise programs help students stay healthy and in school. The environmental benefits include increased native vegetation and better water quality for the neighborhood.

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Eisenhower Intermediate

North Mason High School is located at the very tip of the Hood Canal in a small community called Belfair. North Mason High School began integrating around an environmental theme over a decade ago. Today, it has deeply rooted sustainable elements in place in various areas of the schools. Like many schools, they have implemented a wide range of sustainable practices including: a complete energy upgrade; paper, commingled plastic, glass, cans, and computer cartridge recycling; minimization of pesticide use; reduced use of chemicals in science labs, including replacement of chemical testing with electronic probes, and careful choices in purchasing. These resource/energy conservation and waste/toxicity reductions are great, but not what makes North Mason stand out. North Mason's work in the field of biological diversity through partnerships with the community is where they really shine. North Mason's Hood Canal Institute program has been recognized as a leader in connecting students with agency and community partners to accomplish monitoring, restoration and educational programs. From Governor Locke, to Washington State Departments of Fish & Wildlife and Natural Resources, to the Association of Washington Business and North Mason's Chamber of Commerce, the program has been noted to bring together the local community to improve the health of the local ecosystem.

The breadth of restoration and environmental stewardship this program has delved into is amazing.

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Orchard Heights Elementary is one of ten K-6 elementary schools in the South Kitsap School District. Teaching and learning about the environment has been an ongoing process at Orchard Heights. Now, a project that was envisioned two years ago is now becoming a reality. This project is to create outdoor living classrooms, to reduce the risk of adverse health effects by providing pesticide-free play areas, and creating native plant and wildlife habitats in the semi-urban school environment. The school's site will enhance learning through interactive demonstration areas and serve the community by providing passive recreation opportunities.

They propose to use the award funds to fix flooding issues in the courtyard area by developing a rain garden, increasing the number of raised gardening beds to at least 6 so each grade level has the opportunity to plant and work in a garden setting, and to build an outdoor covered area for both student and community instructional purposes.

This project was designed so others can duplicate its success. It is the hope of Orchard Heights that teachers from surrounding schools will bring their students to the site for enhanced learning opportunities and that during the summer families will utilize the site to grow vegetables augmenting their budget and diet with healthy foods. Teaching staff will have access to hands-on activities integrating garden areas and activities with existing curricular goals and objectives aligned with the Essential Academic Learning Requirements and build skills required for the Washington Assessment of Student Learning. All community members can use the project to learn how to landscape "naturally" using ornamental grasses and plants native to our area and how to reduce the need for chemical soil enhancements and excessive watering. Above all, the completion of this project will increase awareness of environmental issues for individuals and increase awareness of our own community resources.



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Langley Middle School is located on Whidbey Island in a rural area north of Seattle. It has a school population of 529 students and 30 certificated staff members.

Sustainable practices at Langley Middle School have developed from a perceived need by staff and students for change. The influence of multiple curricular areas has been a driving force in the improvement ranging from environmental studies in science, health and wellness in Physical Education/health to a less toxic approach by the maintenance department. Over the last decade a few staff members and students have pushed to make drastic changes in a system that wasn't very amenable to change; and which also held the resources for change. As a result of our varied programs in service to the environment and community, Langley Middle School was named one of 16 National Service Learning Leader Schools in 2002-03. Although there have been setbacks along the way, continued energy and perseverance have created positive progress toward our sustainable practices.

Langley Middle School views every challenge and barrier as an opportunity to open closed doors. With their current lack of funding we recognize the opportunity to partner with other organizations having similar goals. For example, they work with Puget Sound Energy, Maxwellton Stream Adventure, The South Whidbey Community Engagement Center, The Children's Environmental Trust, The Sister Island Project, The Center for Children's Environmental Health, Washington State Parks, Island County Solid Waste, and Americorps. Even though the funding issues are being creatively addressed through these partnerships, time continues to be a resource in short supply. With the increasing demands by the Federal, State, and local educational communities, the teacher time required to manage sustainable activities outside the classroom is increasingly difficult.



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Montlake Elementary School is a Seattle public school in a city neighborhood. Like many urban schools, most of the school grounds are asphalt and concrete. Their greenhouse and garden have become spots of beauty and nature for the kids, as well as, a hands-on learning environment integrating science, math, language arts and social studies.

As a school, Montlake has always had a strong commitment to environmental education. Through field trips and science units, the children learn about their place in the Northwest Ecosystem. One of Montlake's challenges was to figure out a way to provide an opportunity for students to use the existing greenhouse at Montlake School without increasing the curriculum demands on our classroom teachers. The solution was to implement the Greenhouse and Garden Project. Initially supported financially by the Montlake PTA, funding for the project has also come from business partnerships and grants.

Through the greenhouse and garden project, Montlake School has spearheaded an effort to provide a less toxic and more nurturing natural environment for the children. They have diverse opportunities to actively protect their environment and connect to their community. They have a chance to dig in the dirt and grow real food together. The success of our program is measured in the increasing confidence of the children as they make responsible decisions for the environment. They measure their success in thriving plants and muddy children.



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Tolt Middle School is located in the rural city of Carnation. As part of the Green Schools Program, Tolt is doing a better job communicating the ways everyone can help keep their community “green”. Students and the community benefit from the entire student population participating in recycling efforts. Students participate daily in tossing paper in the correct disposal bins in the classroom, throwing their pop cans in the “big blue” containers and dumping their plastic bottles in the “huge gray” bottles during their lunch



period. When a habit is formed at one place (such as at school), then the chances will increase that the habit will take place at home and/or in the community. Certainly, these “good” habits will move along with these students wherever they go: from our classrooms, into their homes, into the community and onto their next educational setting.

The number of students interested and participating in one, some or all of Tolt’s environmental efforts is the barometer used to measure success of these programs. Every year, more and more students become involved in the lunchtime (recycling) collection efforts, staying after school to work in the garden, or are overheard in their classrooms sharing with friends and staff about their contributions to the greater community.

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Cashmere Middle School is located in the community of Cashmere, in central Washington, about twelve miles from the city of Wenatchee. The closest recycling center is located in Wenatchee. The middle school has had a very active recycling/environmental club for the past twelve years. The club is composed of 7th and 8th graders. Their job on Wednesdays is to service each classroom by picking up their recycling bin, taking it to the recycling shed and sorting the items into their proper location. They then load the truck and get it ready to transport recyclable materials to the recycle center. Club members also plan environmental events. Activities have included assemblies, recycling contests, planting streambeds with native plants, helping with reforestation and planning for the construction of the recycling shed. The most recent endeavor has been the addition of a solar panel to help generate electricity. This has been done in cooperation with the Chelan County Public Utility District.

Over the years, the program has evolved from 10 students setting an empty apple bin out in front of the school for recyclables to maintaining a program in conjunction with the City of Cashmere and operating a large recycling drop off center on school grounds. The program has been popular year after year with the students and has continued to grow. Funds generated from the recycled materials have gone back into the program and helped the program to continue to expand. Chelan County, the City of Cashmere, the Cashmere School District and now the Chelan County Public Utility District have worked together to help make this program a leader among school recycling programs.



Cashmere solar panel

Cashmere Middle School has a fun and educational program for students. By being actively involved with it they learn from it and take ownership in it. The recycling program at Cashmere Middle School is a program that is here to stay.

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Komachin Middle School is located in the city of Lacey. Every other year since Komachin Middle School opened in 1992, students have participated in the year long school-wide integrated study of Sustainable Communities. Throughout the school year, students study six indicators of sustainability (Resource Consumption, Biodiversity, Public Participation, Social Harmony, Basic Needs Met, and Health and Wellness) in their core content classes.

All students are required to participate in at least two hours of service directly linked to one of these indicators. Students and staff organize ample service opportunities and many students often volunteer for much more than two hours. Komachin's program directly benefits the community by developing citizens that are not only able to identify problems but have the skills to solve them.

A student run recycling program and a garden have provided opportunities for students to put into practice what they are learning in the classroom.

Implementing an integrated sustainability curriculum program that is reflected in the practices and culture of a public school is a significant challenge in a high-stakes testing environment. Throughout the content areas, social studies, language, math, and science, our priorities continue to be driven by the external demands of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning and the federal "No Child Left Behind" Act. Each content team on one level is committed to our school-wide sustainability project, but our ability to spend time planning, expanding, and implementing new ideas are impacted by the time it takes responding to these priorities. Teaching the values of stewardship, appreciation for biodiversity and developing a deep understanding of the interdependence between the ecological, economic, and social factors of sustainability can be justified through the lens of the states Essential Academic Learning Requirements, but the task is significant.



Komachin Middle School

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The next four schools are all from the Mount Baker School District. Harmony, Mt. Baker, Acme, and Kendall all work together to ensure the continued success of their recycling program. The student's enthusiasm for reuse, recycling, and waste reduction is ever present in the whole school district.

The Mt. Baker School's recycling program is unique in that it encompasses the whole district. The program is self-supported, and has continued even in the face of severe budget cuts. The schools are constantly looking for ways to improve the program, and their enthusiasm is outstanding.

All classrooms and workstations have recycling bins and everyone is expected to practice the three R's (which are reduce, reuse and recycle). The program begins in kindergarten so by the time the students graduate high school they have had 13 years of waste reduction, reuse, and recycling experience.

The role of waste reduction and recycling is included in many aspects of the curriculum.

In both social studies and science students learn about renewable and non-renewable resources. Activities include making paper, documenting the amount of waste reduction, learning about cycles involved in composting, and how plants grow in separate mediums. Reuse is a very popular aspect of Mt. Baker's program. Students and staff donate items for reuse in the district. Items not used in the district are donated to other educational entities, loaned to home school students or sold before considering disposal.

The school grounds are planted with native plants eliminating special watering considerations, and pest management. Mulching of the landscape also requires less water, if any at all, and keeps maintenance of the beds minimal.



Mt. Baker Schools

The schools of Mt. Baker feel they are helping students, staff and the community, gain knowledge of sustainable practices that they will carry on for the rest of their lives. The enthusiasm for reuse, recycling, and waste reduction is ever present in the whole school district. Mt. Baker School District will use their award to purchase a computer to store recycling data on, materials to share at regional conferences and for rewarding student efforts.

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Additional Information

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Terry Husseman Sustainable School Awards site: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/terryhusseman.html>

Award application: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/0207020.html>

Ecology's Solid Waste Program Web site: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/index.html>

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